

Tuesday, 14 February, 2022

## Beyond Blue welcomes new Closing the Gap national plan and funding

Beyond Blue welcomes the Australian Government's second Closing the Gap Implementation Plan, which injects \$424 million into initiatives aimed at improving life outcomes for First Nations Peoples.

The plan, released on the 15th anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations, invests in measures that many non-Indigenous people take for granted, such as having access to safe drinking water, food security, housing and family violence support and education.

**Beyond Blue CEO Georgie Harman** said progress had been appallingly slow in closing the gap over the past 16 years, since the campaign began.

"It's unacceptable that today, in 2023, there remains a significant gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous rates of suicide, incarceration and child removal," Ms Harman said.

"It's time for Australia to learn from previous policy failures and work together with First Nations Peoples to address these shocking realities."

The plan commits to strengthening formal partnerships between the government and First Nations communities and organisations. Ms Harman said any partnership must be founded on Indigenous knowledge, strength and leadership, and supported by deep listening and sustainable funding.

"The First Nations leadership and governance offered by the Coalition of Peaks has brought a refreshed sense of hope," Ms Harman said.

"It is my hope and sincere belief that we can achieve better outcomes for First Nations Peoples through governments working alongside communities and community-controlled organisations."

Beyond Blue is a proud member of the Close the Gap Campaign Alliance and is committed to walking together in friendship with First Nations communities and organisations to promote healing, unity and improved social and emotional wellbeing.

"The upcoming referendum on the Voice to Parliament is an important step in accepting the invitation extended to all of us in the Uluru Statement from the Heart," Ms Harman said.

"The statement, which calls for the Voice, treaty making and truth telling, aims to build a future based on First Nation Peoples' self-determination, justice and sovereignty."

**ENDS**

**13YARN:** crisis support line for First Nations Peoples – 13 92 76 or visit [13yarn.org.au](https://13yarn.org.au)

**Beyond Blue Support Service** - 1300 22 4636 or [beyondblue.org.au/get-support](https://beyondblue.org.au/get-support)